

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MOVEMENT MORTGAGE, LLC,
Plaintiff,
v.
TODD SCRIMA,
Defendant.

No. 2:23-cv-02904-DJC-CSK

ORDER

Before the Court is Defendant Todd Scrima's Motion to Dismiss on the basis that Plaintiff's claims are preempted by the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act and that Plaintiff has failed to sufficiently allege claims against Defendant in his personal capacity. While the Court agrees that Counts Three Through Six are preempted by the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act, the Court concludes that Plaintiff has sufficiently alleged claims against the Defendant in his individual capacity. Accordingly, Defendant's Motion is GRANTED IN PART on preemption grounds and DENIED IN PART.

I. Background

Plaintiff Movement Mortgage, LLC ("Movement"), a real estate financing company, brings the present suit against Defendant Todd Scrima, the owner and President of Movement's competitor Summit Funding, Inc. ("Summit"), alleging that

1 Defendant personally directed a scheme to steal and misappropriate Movement's
2 trade secrets, including Movement's business model, customer data, and employee
3 data, which led to the solicitation of numerous Movement employees and loss of
4 business. (Compl. (ECF No. 1) ¶¶ 5, 7, 12-13, 31-32, 51, 74.)

5 Plaintiff alleges that Defendant engaged high-level Movement employees and
6 employees with broad access to Movement's information, including a Vice President,
7 divisional, market, and sales leaders, and an assistant to a divisional leader, to carry
8 out his scheme. (*Id.* ¶¶ 12, 17, 21, 24.) He then directed those employees to obtain
9 documents from Movement's database and provide them to Summit. (*Id.* ¶¶ 27-29,
10 46.) One employee, Linda Plymale, downloaded and exported extensive information
11 about Movement's loans and loan officers, training and recruiting, various positions at
12 Movement, and other business methods information. (*Id.* ¶¶ 29-34.) Within months
13 of downloading this information, Plymale resigned from Movement and began
14 working for Summit days later. (*Id.* ¶¶ 29, 33, 36.) Another employee, Deran
15 Pennington, the Executive Vice President of Recruiting, allegedly obtained
16 Movement's profit and loss statements ("P&Ls") and provided them to Summit at
17 Defendant's behest. (*Id.* ¶¶ 39-46.) Pennington allegedly signed a confidentiality
18 agreement with Summit in March 2023, but continued working at Movement for
19 months in order to obtain the information. (*Id.* ¶¶ 23-25.)

20 According to Plaintiff, Defendant then used that information to target other
21 employees at Movement, including loan officers, and direct them to divert loans and
22 customers to Summit. These loan officers would obtain information about the
23 customers and prepare their loans, but instead of finalizing the loans, would divert the
24 customers to a loan officer at Summit, after which they would resign from Movement
25 and start employment with Summit. (*Id.* ¶¶ 51-60.) Summit would then ultimately
26 finalize the loans with the diverted customers. (*Id.*) In total, Summit solicited more
27 than 50 Movement employees. (*Id.* ¶ 74.)

28

1 Plaintiff alleges that Defendant's conduct violates the federal Defend Trade
 2 Secrets Act ("DTSA") 18 U.S.C. § 1836, the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act
 3 ("CUTSA") Cal. Gen. Stat. § 3426, the California Unfair Competition Law ("UCL") Cal.
 4 Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 *et seq.*, the California Comprehensive Computer Data
 5 Access and Fraud Act ("Computer Fraud Act"), Cal. Penal Code § 502,¹ and constitutes
 6 tortious interference with contractual relations and civil conspiracy. (See *Id.* ¶¶ 63-
 7 133.)

8 Defendant brings the present Motion to Dismiss arguing that Plaintiff's tort
 9 claims and claims under the UCL and section 502 are preempted by the California
 10 Uniform Trade Secrets Act and argues that Plaintiff has failed to state a claim against
 11 Defendant in his personal capacity. (Mot. to Dismiss ("MTD") (ECF No. 6).) Plaintiff has
 12 opposed the Motion and Defendant has filed a Reply. (See Opp'n (ECF No. 11); Reply
 13 (ECF No. 13).) Upon the joint Motion of the Parties, this case was submitted without
 14 oral argument pursuant to local rule 230(g). (ECF Nos. 18 and 19.)

15 **II. Legal Standard for Motion to Dismiss**

16 A party may move to dismiss for "failure to state a claim upon which relief can
 17 be granted." Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). The motion may be granted if the complaint
 18 lacks a "cognizable legal theory" or if its factual allegations do not support a
 19 cognizable legal theory. *Godecke v. Kinetic Concepts, Inc.*, 937 F.3d 1201, 1208 (9th
 20 Cir. 2019) (quoting *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep't*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1988)).
 21 The Court assumes all factual allegations are true and construes "them in the light
 22 most favorable to the nonmoving party." *Steinle v. City and Cnty. of San Francisco*,
 23 919 F.3d 1154, 1160 (9th Cir. 2019) (quoting *Parks Sch. of Bus., Inc. v. Symington*, 51
 24 F.3d 1480, 1484 (9th Cir. 1995)). If the complaint's allegations do not "plausibly give
 25 rise to an entitlement to relief," the motion must be granted. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556
 26 U.S. 662, 679 (2009).

27
 28 ¹ Section 502 of the California Penal Code allows individuals to bring a civil suit against a violator of the
 California Data Access and Fraud Act. Cal. Penal Code § 502(e)(1).

1 A complaint need contain only a "short and plain statement of the claim
2 showing that the pleader is entitled to relief," Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2), not "detailed
3 factual allegations," *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). But this rule
4 demands more than unadorned accusations; "sufficient factual matter" must make the
5 claim at least plausible. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. In the same vein, conclusory or
6 formulaic recitations of elements do not alone suffice. *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at
7 555). This evaluation of plausibility is a context-specific task drawing on "judicial
8 experience and common sense." *Id.* at 679.

9 **III. Discussion**

10 **A. CUTSA Preemption**

11 Section 3426.7 of the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act "implicitly preempts
12 alternative civil remedies based on trade secret misappropriation." *K.C. Multimedia,
13 Inc. v. Bank of Am. Tech. & Operations, Inc.*, 171 Cal. App. 4th 939, 954 (2009). "The
14 statute's preemptive sweep is broad – it supersedes all claims premised on the
15 wrongful taking and use of confidential and proprietary information, even if that
16 information does not meet the statutory definition of a trade secret." *VBS Distribution,
17 Inc. v. Nutrivila Lab'ys, Inc.*, No. SA-CV-16-01553-CJC-DFM, 2020 WL 6259999, at *4
18 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 28, 2020) (citing *Silvaco Data Sys. v. Intel Corp.*, 184 Cal. App. 4th 210,
19 239 n.22 (2010)). The act does not affect contractual or criminal remedies, whether or
20 not based on appropriation of trade secret, nor does it affect other civil remedies
21 "that are not based upon misappropriation of a trade secret." Cal. Civ. Code
22 § 3426.7(b). However, any civil claims that are "'based on the same nucleus of facts as
23 the misappropriation of trade secrets claim'" are preempted. *K.C. Multimedia*, 171
24 Cal. App. 4th at 958 (quoting *Digital Envoy, Inc. v. Google, Inc.*, 370 F. Supp. 2d 1025,
25 1035 (N.D. Cal. 2005)).

26 "The preemption inquiry for those causes of action not specifically exempted by
27 [section] 3426.7(b) focuses on whether other claims are no more than a restatement of
28 the same operative facts supporting trade secret misappropriation." *Farmers Ins.*

1 *Exch. v. Steele Ins. Agency, Inc.*, No. 2:13-CV-00784-MCE, 2014 WL 466274, at *3 (E.D.
2 Cal. Feb. 5, 2014). “Preemption is not triggered where the facts in an independent
3 claim are similar to, but distinct from, those underlying the misappropriation claim.”
4 *Id.* (quoting *Gabriel Techs. Corp. v. Qualcomm Inc.*, No. 08-CV-1992-MM-POR, 2009
5 WL 3326631, at *11 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 3, 2009)). The claims cannot “simply depend on a
6 ‘different theory of liability’ to survive CUTSA’s preemptive effect.” *Philips N. Am. LLC*
7 *v. Advanced Imaging Servs., Inc.*, No. 2:21-CV-00876-JAM-AC, 2021 WL 5054395, at
8 *3 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 1, 2021). Rather, claims must allege “materially distinguishable”
9 facts to avoid preemption. *C&H Travel & Tours, Inc. v. Chow*, No. 2:18-CV-06690-RGK-
10 MRW, 2018 WL 6427369, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2018). “If the claim is based ‘in
11 essence [on] the same wrongdoing’ as the alleged CUTSA claim, it is preempted.” *Id.*
12 at *3. For example, where the defendant used fake credentials to gain access to trade
13 secrets, a fraud claim based on the fake credentials was preempted by CUTSA
14 because both claims “ar[o]se from Defendants’ unauthorized access to Plaintiff’s
15 system.” *Philips*, 2021 WL 5054395 at *3. In contrast, a claim that the defendant
16 “disparaged Plaintiff to employees or convinced employees to join a competitor”
17 without using trade secret information was not based on the same facts as the trade
18 secret misappropriation claim. *C&H Travel & Tours*, 2018 WL 6427369 at *3.

19 Defendant asserts that Plaintiff’s tortious interference with contractual relations,
20 civil conspiracy, UCL, and California penal code section 502 claims are preempted by
21 CUTSA. The Court will address each in turn below.

22 **i. Intentional Interference with Economic Relations**

23 The tortious interference claim alleges that Defendant interfered with the
24 contractual agreements entered into by Plaintiff and its former employees by inducing
25 them to violate restrictive covenants, non-solicitation agreements, and confidentiality
26 agreements. (Compl. ¶¶ 15-18, 97.) Specifically, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant
27 targeted Movement employees and “ordered the misappropriation of Movement’s
28 confidential information and trade secrets through these employees, inducing and

1 causing them to violate their contractual obligations with Movement." (*Id.* ¶ 98.) This
2 claim is based on the same facts as the misappropriation of trade secrets because the
3 contracts were breached by misappropriating the trade secrets. Like in *Phillips*, the
4 tortious interference claim excises a portion of facts underlying the CUTSA claim and
5 attempts to fashion a second claim out of those same facts in contravention of CUTSA.

6 In *K.C. Multimedia, Inc. v. Bank of America Technology & Operations, Inc.*, the
7 court found an interference with contract claim alleging similar facts to be preempted
8 both legally and factually by CUTSA. 171 Cal. App. 4th at 960-61. There, the plaintiff
9 alleged that the defendant had encouraged the employee to misappropriate the
10 trade secrets, and that the employee breached the contract by *misappropriating the*
11 *trade secrets*. See *id.* The claim was legally preempted because CUTSA covers
12 "improper means" of acquiring a trade secret including the "breach or inducement of
13 a breach of a duty to maintain secrecy." *Id.* Factually, the two claims were based on
14 the same conduct of encouraging the employee to acquire and share confidential
15 information. *Id.*

16 In contrast, in *Rovince Intern. Corp. v. Preston*, the court found the interference
17 claim could be separated from the CUTSA claim because the contract was not
18 breached by the misappropriation itself. There, the defendant "persuaded one of [the
19 plaintiff's] suppliers to breach its contract" with the plaintiff. No. CV-13-3527-CAS-
20 PJW, 2013 WL 5539430, at *4 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 7, 2013). The court found that the claim
21 was not preempted because "none of the elements of Rovince's claim for inducing
22 breach of contract will turn on [the employee]'s alleged misuse of confidential
23 information." *Id.* at *5. The Rovince court distinguished *K.M. Multimedia*, where the
24 plaintiff "could only prevail on their claim for contractual interference if they proved
25 that trade secrets were in fact misappropriated." *Id.* Here, similar to *K.C. Multimedia*
26 Plaintiff's claim with respect to the restrictive covenants and confidentiality
27 agreements relies on proving misappropriation because Plaintiff alleges that it was the
28 misappropriation of confidential information by the employees which violated those

1 agreements.

2 The portion of the interference claim alleging violation of the non-solicitation
3 agreements also cannot be separated from the misappropriation claim. Plaintiff
4 alleges that it was Defendant's use of the misappropriated trade secrets which
5 "result[ed] in the successful solicitation of fifty (50) Movement employees whom
6 Defendants *could not have solicited without the trade secret and data theft described*
7 *herein.*" (Compl. ¶ 74 (emphasis added).) The solicitation of the employees is
8 therefore inherently intertwined with the misappropriation of the trade secrets.

9 *JEB Group, Inc. v. San Jose*, relied on by Plaintiff, is factually distinguishable.
10 There, the plaintiff alleged that the defendants improperly solicited the plaintiff's
11 clients and thereby interfered with the plaintiff's prospective economic relations. No.
12 CV-19-04230-CJC-AGR, 2020 WL 2790012, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 31, 2020). However,
13 it was "unclear from the complaint whether this improper solicitation hinged on
14 Defendants' misappropriation of [Plaintiff]'s confidential client lists." *Id.* at *4.
15 Accordingly, the court, viewing the complaint in the light most favorable to the
16 plaintiff, held that it was "reasonable to infer that Defendants interfered with
17 [Plaintiff]'s business relationships without relying on trade secrets or other confidential
18 information." *Id.* Here there is no such ambiguity: Plaintiff explicitly alleges that
19 Defendant did rely on the trade secrets in order to improperly solicit the other
20 employees. Accordingly, this claim is preempted by CUTSA.

21 **ii. Civil Conspiracy**

22 The civil conspiracy claim is also preempted by CUTSA because it relies on the
23 same facts as the CUTSA claim. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant "conspired to take the
24 tortious actions described herein against Movement together with certain Movement
25 employees . . . for the primary purpose of acquiring and misusing Movement's trade
26 secrets and confidential and proprietary information as well as to solicit Movement
27 employees and customers . . ." (Compl. ¶¶ 113-114.) Despite Plaintiff's attempt to
28 split hairs and argue that Defendant had initially only "developed a scheme to initiate

1 a corporate raid of Movement's employees using the Company's former high-level
2 managers," the Complaint does not allege that Defendant took any steps in
3 furtherance of this limited conspiracy or engaged the other employees at this point.
4 (Opp'n at 10; Compl. ¶ 12.) Instead, Plaintiff alleges in the next sentence that
5 Defendant "recognized that Summit was not able to successfully compete with
6 Movement, recruit its staff, or be competitive in the marketplace even with those
7 former members on board if he did not also steal Movement's trade secrets and
8 computer file" and that Defendant "personally orchestrated a plan to steal
9 Movement's trade secrets to facilitate his plans to raid its employees and copy its
10 business model." (Compl. ¶ 12 (emphasis added).) According to Plaintiff's
11 allegations, the misappropriation was integral to the goal of soliciting employees and
12 diverting customers. Plaintiff does not allege any conspiratorial conduct unrelated to
13 this scheme to misappropriate trade secrets. As such, the claim is preempted under
14 CUTSA.

15 Despite Plaintiff's reliance on *Farmers Ins. Exchange v. Steele Ins. Agency, Inc.*,
16 which held that the formation of a conspiracy can be separated from CUTSA by the
17 addition of facts including the agreement to steal trade secrets and the formation of
18 the conspiracy, that case is inconsistent with the nucleus of facts test and its premise
19 has been rejected by multiple courts. See *Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. v. Tarantino*, No.
20 20-CV-05505-EMC, 2022 WL 4092673, at *15 (N.D. Cal. July 27, 2022) (collecting
21 cases). Courts have held that merely adding additional facts to a claim or pleading a
22 different theory of liability based on the same facts is not sufficient to escape CUTSA
23 preemption where the core facts are common among the claims. See *Philips*, 2021
24 WL 5054395 at *3; *SunPower Corp. v. SolarCity Corp.*, No. 12-CV-00694-LHK, 2012
25 WL 6160472, at *12 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 11, 2012). "[T]he nucleus of fact test does not
26 focus on whether a non-CUTSA claim requires the pleading of different elements than
27 the CUTSA claim, but rather on whether 'there is [a] material distinction between the
28 wrongdoing alleged in a [C]UTSA claim and that alleged in [the non-CUTSA] claim . . .

1 .” SunPower Corp., 2012 WL 6160472, at *12. As stated above, because the civil
2 conspiracy claim is based on the same core facts as the CUTSA claim, it is preempted.

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5 **iii. Section 502 and UCL**

6 Plaintiff argues that its UCL and section 502 claims cannot be preempted
7 because they are based on statutory violations. While CUTSA states that it does not
8 “not supersede any statute relating to misappropriation of a trade secret, or any
9 statute otherwise regulating trade secrets,” Cal. Civ. Code § 3426.7(a), this language
10 does not apply to “every statute that *might be applied* to trade secret theft, but only to
11 preserve the operation of the many statutes that *expressly allude* to trade secrets in
12 particular settings.” *Silvaco Data Sys. v. Intel Corp.*, 184 Cal. App. 4th 210, 241 (2010),
13 *as modified on denial of reh'g* (May 27, 2010) (emphasis in original). Courts have
14 found that both the UCL and section 502 are not the type of trade secret specific
15 statute exempted by CUTSA because they are not directed at regulating trade secrets
16 and have applicability beyond trade secrets. *Id.* (UCL); *Teva Pharm. USA, Inc. v.*
17 *Health IQ, LLC*, No. SA-CV-13-00308-CJC-RNB, 2013 WL 12132029, at *5 (C.D. Cal.
18 Apr. 29, 2013) (UCL); *Henry Schein, Inc. v. Cook*, No. 16-CV-03166-JST, 2017 WL
19 783617, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 1, 2017) (section 502); *C&H Travel*, 2018 WL 6427369, at
20 *2 (section 502). As such neither the UCL nor 502 are outside of CUSTA’s preemptive
21 reach.

22 Although some courts have determined that California Penal Code 502 is not
23 preempted by CUTSA because the remedy is derived from a criminal code section
24 and criminal remedies are exempted, these courts fail to account for the plain
25 language of CUTSA which states that “civil remedies,” based on misappropriation are
26 preempted. Cal. Civ. Code § 3426.7(b) (emphasis added); see *JEB Grp.*, 2020 WL
27 2790012, at *4 (relying solely on language from *K.C. Multimedia* that states CUTSA
28 preempts “common law” claims in finding that a statutory violation cannot be

1 preempted and not referencing the language in CUTSA); *Heieck v. Fed. Signal Corp.*,
2 No. SA-CV-18-02118-AGK-ES, 2019 WL 6873869, at *4 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 4, 2019)
3 (finding no preemption because “section 502 is a criminal statute that contains
4 criminal remedies” without acknowledging that the plaintiff was seeking a civil
5 remedy, not a criminal remedy). The Court is instead persuaded by the reasoning in
6 *ATS Prod., Inc. v. Champion Fiberglass, Inc.*, No. 13-CV-02403-SI, 2015 WL 224815, at
7 *2 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 15, 2015). There the court found that a claim under California Penal
8 Code section 496, which similarly provides for civil remedies, was not exempted from
9 CUTSA preemption because the plaintiff sought civil remedies, not criminal remedies.
10 *Id.* Here too Plaintiff seeks only civil remedies and thus the claim is not exempted.

11 Both the UCL and section 502 claims are based on the same facts as the CUTSA
12 claim and therefore preempted. The section 502 claim alleges that Defendant,
13 through the former Movement employees, accessed Movement’s computers and took
14 its confidential and proprietary information. (Compl. ¶¶ 118, 121-124.) This
15 allegation describes Defendant’s scheme to use the former employees to steal trade
16 secrets by downloading files from Movement databases and computers, and refers to
17 the events recounted in the section of the Complaint entitled “Theft of Trade Secrets
18 and Computer Files.” (*Id.* ¶¶ 22-46.) And in fact, Plaintiff relies on the same exact
19 allegations to form the basis of both the CUTSA and section 502. (Compare *id.*
20 ¶¶ 83-86, with *id.* ¶¶ 124-127.) Accordingly, there is no meaningful difference
21 between facts underlying the section 502 and CUTSA claims.

22 The UCL claim is derivative of the other claims already analyzed by the Court,
23 and so it too is preempted. The UCL claim is based on “Defendant’s acts, as alleged
24 herein, including but not limited to his improper solicitation of Movement’s borrowers,
25 tortious interference with contracts, and aiding and abetting breaches of fiduciary
26 obligations and duties of loyalty, and misappropriation of trade secrets and
27 confidential and proprietary information” (*Id.* ¶ 106.) This claim does not allege
28 any independent conduct which is not based on the same common factual nucleus as

1 the CUTSA claim and is therefore also preempted.

2 For the reasons described above, Counts Three through Six are preempted
3 under CUTSA. Accordingly, Defendant's Motion is GRANTED IN PART, and these
4 claims are DISMISSED.

5 **B. Failure to State a Claim Against Defendant**

6 With respect to the remaining claims alleging violation of DTSA and CUTSA,
7 Defendant argues that Plaintiff has failed to allege sufficient facts to hold him
8 personally liable for the conduct at issue.

9 "A corporate officer or director is, in general, personally liable for all torts which
10 he authorizes or directs or in which he participates, notwithstanding that he acted as
11 an agent of the corporation and not on his own behalf." *Coastal Abstract Serv., Inc. v.*
12 *First Am. Title Ins. Co.*, 173 F.3d 725, 734 (9th Cir. 1999) (quoting *Transgo, Inc. v. Ajac*
13 *Transmission Parts Corp.*, 768 F.2d 1001, 1021 (9th Cir. 1985)). As Defendant has
14 conceded, an individual may be liable for wrongful conduct committed on behalf of a
15 company where that individual was the "'guiding spirit' behind the wrongful conduct, .
16 . . . or the 'central figure' in the challenged corporate activity." *Davis v. Metro Prods.,*
17 *Inc.*, 885 F.2d 515, 523, n.10 (9th Cir. 1989) (quoting *Escude Cruz v. Ortho*
18 *Pharmaceutical Corp.*, 619 F.2d 902, 907 (1st Cir. 1980)).

19 Plaintiff's Complaint supports an inference that Defendant personally directed
20 the conduct of the employees who stole confidential information from Movement.
21 Plaintiff alleges that Defendant, as the sole owner and President of Summit,
22 "personally orchestrated a plan to steal Movement's trade secrets to facilitate his plans
23 to raid its employees and copy its business model" and provides copious
24 documentary evidence to support these allegations. (See Compl. ¶¶ 5, 12; Exs. A-J
25 (ECF Nos. 1-1-1-10).) First, in a text message thread, Defendant sent the contact
26 information for a then-Movement employee, Plymale, and said that he had a "great
27 call" "working on the first 90 day plan." (Compl. ¶ 27; Ex. B (ECF No. 1-2).) Within
28 weeks of this message, Plymale began accessing and downloading a number of

1 Movement reports and documents from Movement's database in unprecedented
2 ways. (See Compl. ¶¶ 27 -36.) She also retained her Movement laptop past the
3 effective date of her resignation and visited Summit headquarters while she still had
4 the laptop. (See *id.* ¶¶ 36-38.) Days later, Plymale began her employment with
5 Summit, and accessed the downloaded Movement documents during the first few
6 days of her employment. (*Id.*) All of these actions appear to stem from Defendant's
7 "plan."

8 In a different thread, Defendant discusses "P&Ls" that he asked another officer
9 to request from a different then-Movement employee, Pennington. Defendant asks,
10 "did you receive p&l's[?]" to which the officer says, "Requested twice from Deran², not
11 received." (*Id.*, Ex. C (ECF No. 1-3).) The Summit officer then asks, "Are you sure you
12 want movement p&ls's (their proprietary/confidential docs) on summit servers?" to
13 which Defendant replies "Not on our servers. Can you maybe set up misc whatsapp
14 account and have them texted there?" (Compl. ¶ 40.) Again, these messages support
15 the allegation that Defendant directed others to obtain the trade secret information.

16 Plaintiff also provides evidence that Defendant directed others to
17 misappropriate the allegedly stolen trade secrets. Once the P&Ls were received,
18 Defendant sent an email saying "Team, Please dissect this!" (*Id.* ¶ 41.) On a recorded
19 call, a former Summit officer recounted the Summit CFO saying about analyzing
20 Movement's stolen data "if Todd [Scrima] wants me to do this, I'm going to do this."
21 (*Id.*, Ex. E (ECF No. 1-5) at 14.) These allegations, taken as a whole, sufficiently tie
22 Defendant to the conduct at issue and support a plausible inference that Defendant
23 was organizing and directing the alleged scheme to steal and misappropriate
24 Movement's trade secrets.

25 There are also sufficient facts to support the allegation that Defendant directed
26 the scheme to solicit Movement customers. The allegedly stolen information
27

28 ² "Deran" refers to Deran Pennington, Movement's then Executive Vice President of Recruiting.

1 contained lists of Movement employees and customers. (*Id.* ¶¶ 42, 67.) Months after
2 Defendant and Summit received this information, loan officers began resigning from
3 Movement, and joining Summit. In the interim, these officers diverted Movement
4 customers over to Summit. (*Id.* ¶¶ 52, 58-60.) Plaintiff alleges that this scheme too
5 was orchestrated by Defendant. (*Id.* ¶ 62.) Although Plaintiff provides less facts tying
6 Defendant personally to the scheme, the other facts pertaining to his involvement in
7 obtaining and misappropriating the trade secrets, coupled with the close proximity
8 between the retention of the trade secrets and the initiation of these scheme, and
9 Defendant's role as the owner and President of Summit, make it plausible that
10 Defendant was also the "guiding spirit" behind soliciting the other employees and
11 customers.

12 Accordingly, Plaintiff's remaining causes of action are sufficiently plead, and the
13 Motion is DENIED as to Counts One and Two.

14 **IV. Conclusion**

15 For the above reasons, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Defendant's Motion to Dismiss
16 (ECF No. 6) is GRANTED IN PART as to Counts Three through Six and DENIED IN
17 PART as to Counts One and Two. Counts Three through Six are DISMISSED with leave
18 to amend. Any amended complaint must be filed within 30 days of the date of this
19 Order.

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21 IT IS SO ORDERED.

22 Dated: June 10, 2024


Hon. Daniel J. Calabretta
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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